

Dear Honored Co-chairs Sen. Lopes & Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Hochadel & Rep. Palon, Ranking Members Sen. Harding & Rep. Callahan, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee:

My comments today are concerning Section 1 of Governor's Bill # 6664, An Act Concerning Managing Waste & Creating a Waste Authority. My name is Harold Panciera, and I support this effort, but also have some recommendations.

Put me on the list of citizens who believe we have to come up with solutions for our problems around the disposal of our garbage in an environmentally friendly way. Important steps need to be taken this year.

One of those solutions would be an extended producer responsibility law (EPR) that effectively shifts waste management of packaging materials to the manufacturers, thereby reducing the financial hardships and fiscal uncertainties now facing many municipalities in Connecticut.

This bill would set up a stewardship for packaging material based on the models for mattresses and paint. It has the potential to relieve much of the burden now borne by our towns and cities. One attractive feature is that it will provide incentives to manufacturers and vendors to adopt more sustainable and recyclable packaging. However, in its final form the bill needs to ensure there is an enforcement mechanism in place that will monitor progress toward the goals that are clearly defined. There should be severe enough penalties in place that will deter non-compliance.

Now is the time to set a high minimum requirement to use packaging that gets recycled, and is also made from a high percentage of recycled content. In addition the amount of packaging per product needs to be reduced to the safest minimum.

Manufacturers should have a reasonable amount of time to reach these goals. However, as an example, do the makers of plastic bottles need ten years to produce a container that has only 50 % recycled content as proposed in this bill? If we do indeed have a crisis, then a decade is too long to wait for most changes.

DEEP has estimated that an EPR for packaging will divert our waste by 190,000 tons. This, along with programs to divert food waste (Quantum Biopower, municipal composting) will contribute to more sustainable and equitable disposal policies. We need to stop shipping our garbage to states

hundreds of miles away. This contributes to air pollution and climate change. More likely than not the trash will be dumped in communities often victimized by environmental injustices. More trash-to-energy plants will also contribute to these problems.

Thank you for your efforts to take serious action now.

Harold Panciera

Middletown